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RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RHMFISS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
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RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
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RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2917

C O N F I D E N T I A L HAVANA 000181

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TAGS: [CU](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: CUBA HUMAN RIGHTS ROUND-UP FEB. 8-22

Classified By: COM: M.E. Parmly : For reasons 1.4 b/d

¶1. (C) LEADING DISSIDENT ROBERTO DE MIRANDA CALLED BEFORE STATE SECURITY: Roberto de Miranda (RDM), who was instrumental in creating Cuba's independent library movement, on February 8 was told to appear at an immigration office. The next day, when RDM and his wife went to the office, instead of an immigration official, they were greeted by state security officer Samper, the chief of "Section 21" in charge of counter-intelligence. According to RDM, Samper "expressed concern" for the financial burden of the many youth and opposition members who regularly go to RDM's small apartment as a place to stay in Havana. RDM stated that he and his wife told Samper that they will never deny food or shelter to anyone, not even to those who support the regime. RDM feared a blackmail attempt because he and his wife have been anxiously awaiting if the GOC will allow their son, who lives in Spain, to visit them. However, no specific threat was made. RDM and his wife said that they both told Samper clearly that they will continue their work with the opposition even if it means that they will have to wait for the regime to fall before their family can be reunited. Visitors going to the home of RDM at any time of day still encounter youths and members of various opposition groups from all parts of Cuba staying there temporarily.

¶2. (C) CRACKDOWN ON PEDI-CAB DRIVERS: Activists and independent labor union leaders report that on February 12 the police handed out fines of up to 500 pesos to as many as 70 pedi-cab drivers in central Havana. The police confiscated their vehicles and destroyed them at the police station. According to Aurelio Bachiller, General Secretary of CONIC, the largest umbrella organization of independent trade unions in Cuba, the pedi-cab drivers have the strongest independent union on the island and are frequent targets of police harassment. He stated that many drivers are people who came from the provinces desperately seeking work. Bachiller also reported that the authorities frequently refuse licenses to any persons they suspect of political or labor activities. He also remarked that he is sure the police took for themselves the tires and any valuable parts before disposing of the confiscated vehicles

¶3. (C) TRIAL OF HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST POSTPONED: On February 20 the Municipal Court of San Miguel del Padron postponed the trial of Juan Antonio Bermudez Toranzo, Vice

President of the Cuban Foundation of Human Rights, for "lack of witnesses". A new trial date is set for March 4. His family states that on November 21, 2007 "dozens" of police and state security agents violently seized him in his home in the Cambute neighborhood on the outskirts of Havana. Toranzo was held for months without charges until the Court recently charged him with "creating a public disorder", an accusation firmly denied by the family.

14. (U) GOVERNMENT STATES IT WILL INVESTIGATE PRISON ABUSE:

According to pro-democracy activist, Martha Beatriz Roque the Military Court of Camaguey, made an official notification that it will investigate allegations of torture and "cruel and inhuman" treatment filed by prisoners at Prison Kilometer 7 in Camaguey Province. The prisoners made their accusations in writing on January 15. Members of Cuban civil society do not recall any previous allegations being the subject of an official investigation.

PARMLY